various items that come under the Spices Board?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) No' Sir.

Central assistance to export promotion councils

765. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to terminate central assistance to the various export promotion councils in a phased manner;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for the withdrawal of annual grants to these councils; and

(c) what will be the impact of such decision on India's export promotion efforts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The decision to phase out the grant to the Export Promotion Councils was taken to make the Councils self supporting.

(c) There will be no impart on India's export promotion efforts as the Councils will become self supporting.

Export of Agricultural commodities

766. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the value of exports of agricultural commodities during the years 1984-85 to 1989-90 yearwise; with percentage growth;

(b) whether the agricultural exports are stagnating; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to boost exports of agricultural commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Yearwsse details of export of agricultural commodities, as also the growth achieved in exports as compared to previous year's export during the period 1984-85 to 1989-90 are given below:—

Year	Export (Rs. crores)	%Growth in exports over previous year's exports	
1984 85	1163.90	—	—
1985-86	1206.68	(+)	3.68%
1986-87	1539.51	(+)	27.58%
1987-88	1801.61	(+)	17.03%
1988-89	1921.47	(+)	6.65%
1989-90	2578.71	(+)	34.21%

(c) The Government introduced a package of trade policy reforms aimed at strengthening of export incentives, eliminating substantial volume of import licensing and optimal import compression, REP licenses have been replaced by a new instrument named Exim Scrips. These will be the means of obtaining access to certain categories of import of raw materials, components and spares. The system of advance licensing as an instrument of export promotion has also been strengthened. Government have decided to allow established exporters to open foreign currency accounts in approved banks and allow established exporters to raise external credits, pay for export related imports from such accounts and credit export proceeds to such accounts. Besides. Government have taken other steps which include reducing controls through licensing, simplification of procedures for export, activisation of Board ofT rade, bilateral discussion with selected countries, inter-action with national organisations of trade and industry, etc.

767. *[Transferred to the 11th March,* 1992.]

Trade in rupee convertibility with Soviet Union

768. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI:

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI RAM NARESH YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether arrangeiments are being worked out for continuing trade with re publics of Soviet which formed part of erstwhile USSR;

(b) which republics have agreed to honour erstwhile Soviet Union's commit ment to accept payment in Rupees for India's purchases in fields of defence, power, coal and steel;

(c) what is being don© to resolve vexed issue of Rupee Rouble parity and liquidation of technical credit; and

(d) whether Government are prepared for trading in convertible currency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Russian Federation and Ukraine have agreed, in principle, IP the continuance of rupee payment for purchases made in these sectors.

(c) These financial issues are done for further discussion between Russia and India shortly.

(d) The new trading arrangements would permit trade in convertible cur rencies also, besides trade in rupees, barter, counter trade and the like.

SC/ST Post lying vacant under various Undertakings, Boards under die Ministry of Commerce

769. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI;

KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of posts reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes that are lying vacant in various public sector undertakings, Boards and other institutes under the administrative control of his Ministry;

(b) the time when these have been lying vacant: and

(c) what steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken by Government *to* fill up these vacant posts ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to *(c)* The information is being collected s»nd the same will be laid on the Table of the House.

Export of protective foods

770. PROF. I. G. SANADI:

SHRI PRABHAKAR B. KORE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been promoting; exports of various foods such